



#### Menopause: New Advice on Hormone Treatments

About 1 in 5 women going through menopause have severe symptoms--hot flashes, night sweats and sleep problems frequent and uncomfortable enough to significantly disrupt their lives. For some women struck with such problems, recent evidence indicates that hormone drugs can be both effective and worth the downside risks, according to the [latest report](#) from [Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs](#).

Namely, women with severe menopause symptoms who are under age 60 or so, have no heart disease, and are at low risk of heart disease don't appear to be put at increased risk of heart attacks if they take hormones. That's a nuanced finding from widely publicized studies over the last six years about the risks of hormone drugs. However, taking hormones continues to put this group of women (and indeed all women) at somewhat higher risk of breast cancer, blood clots and strokes. So, serious care in the use of hormones is still advised.

For women with less severe symptoms, lifestyle and habit changes can also provide some relief: quitting smoking, exercising regularly, sleeping in a cool room, limiting intake of alcohol and caffeine and reducing stress.

Of course, the use of any hormones should be taken with care and under the guidance of your doctor. Hormones should also only be taken for the shortest time possible and at the lowest dose. If you have diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure, hormones can add to the risk of heart disease.

A total of 14 hormones have been chosen as Best Buys, including generic estradoil, Combipatch and Estraderm. [Click here](#) for the complete list.